

It is relevant to note that a single male *A. fucosa* was caught in a R.I.S. light trap at Rothamsted on 25.viii.1949. Identification was confirmed by examination of the genitalia. So far as we are aware, this record has not previously been published. *A. fucosa* is usually regarded as being a coastal species, though its range in S.E. England does extend some way along the Thames Valley.—ADRIAN M. RILEY and MARTIN C. TOWNSEND, AFRC — Farmland Ecology Group, Dept. Entomology & Nematology, Rothamsted Exp. Stn., Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 2JQ.

**A plea for legal protection for the Sandhill Rustic (*Luperina nickerlii leechi*) (Lep.: Noctuidae) at its site in Cornwall**

Several species of animal and plant are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and subsequent Schedules. This Act makes it an offence to kill, injure, take, possess or sell protected animals or to damage places used by them. All birds are protected except a few pest species, as well as all bats. In many cases species are protected that are not threatened and abundance in certain areas is no bar to protection, as the adder (abundant in Cornwall) is now a protected species. Habitat protection is often the most important means of conservation, but many rare species are scheduled even though their habitat is protected, such as the Swallowtail. Protection focuses attention onto a species, stimulating conservation efforts and encouraging the creation of suitable management plans designed to protect the designated species (A.J. Whitten, 1991, Recovery and hope for Britain's rare species. *British Wildlife*, 2: 219-229). Even within a protected nature reserve, legal protection enhances the status of the species, as is the case with the Heath Fritillary on protected sites in Cornwall, Somerset and Kent.

The Sandhill Rustic ssp. *leechi* is under threat because of the following factors:

1. This subspecies occurs at only one site.
2. Access to the site is unrestricted, including by 4-wheel drive vehicles.
3. The site is heavily used by holidaymakers.
4. It is easy to collect, and has been collected in the past.
5. The site has been recently damaged by construction work.
6. The site is vulnerable to winter gales.

Legal protection for the Sandhill Rustic would help limit damage under items 2-5. It would make collection illegal, control damage by construction workers and encourage management of the site to discourage over-use by people and vehicles. The site could be managed to encourage the spread of the larval foodplant, *Elymus farctus*. Careful single-species conservation often increases the conservation value of an area, particularly for other insects, as has happened at the Cornish site for the Heath Fritillary. Nothing can be done to avoid the threat of factor 6.—ADRIAN SPALDING, Lerryn Cottage, Lostwithiel, Cornwall.